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*Serving James Bay Crees and the
Inuit of Northern Quebec*

the Nation

Volume 1 No. 20 • October 7, 1994
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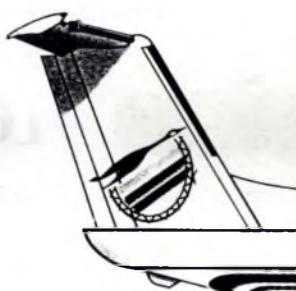
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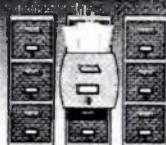
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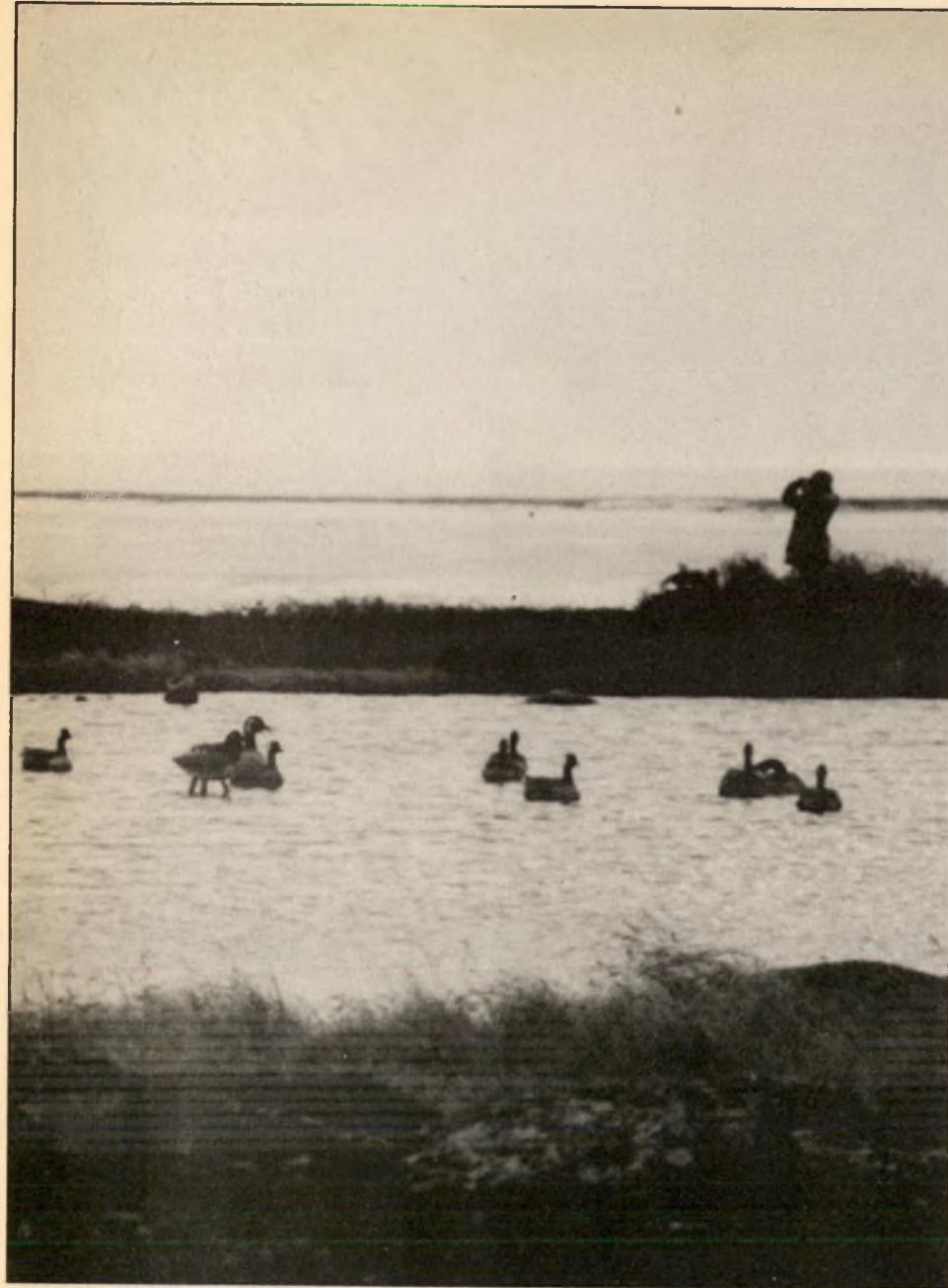
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COVER PHOTO:

Bertie Wapachee.

Photo by Ernest Webb.

OCTOBER 7, 1994



THIS SPACE FOR RENT

Well, actually it's free. Here we are, issue # 20.

I've usually done the editorials for this page. And I've run out of things to say... Actually I'm getting lazy.

So we here at *The Nation* are inviting you to contribute. To contribute to *The Nation* and to your nation. We want you to contribute your thoughts and feelings.

I do have things to say but I need a break. I need to observe and gather my thoughts once again. On top of putting out a paper and everything that goes along with that, sometimes I'm left doing them at the last minute as I'm doing now.

Twenty issues later and it's almost been a year since we've started *The Nation*. And things are going well and we want to thank you, our readers, for the support you've shown. We're bringing in more and more people to help. We're establishing ourselves as a business, which is where a lot of my time goes.

And this is where you come in. It is very easy for us to put something in from a fax. So send us your stories by fax or by mail. By the way, for *The Nation*'s first youth essay contest, the works we received were incredible. We thank you for the time you took to send us your writing.

In closing, we want you to write and send it in.

BY ERNEST WEBB



YOUR CHANGES FOR A CHANGE

The countdown has started. In eight to ten months, the province of Quebec will be looking at a referendum on separation from Canada. That decision will have far-reaching consequences for Crees and other indigenous peoples whose territories, lands or resources happen to be in the present boundaries of the province of Quebec. Whether the separatist or federalist faction wins, it will still affect all the First Nations (presently of Quebec).

This is a period of time that the political power of the Cree peoples of James Bay is stronger than usual. Whatever proposals Crees receive, they will have to investigate vigilantly. Crees will have to determine what is best for a Cree future, not the future of an independent Quebec or Canada. This is the Cree responsibility not only to future generations, but to the land in Cree care.

The actions taken by Cree political leaders and other Cree citizens will require great carefulness and alertness. The lessons learned in the past concerning the duplicity of both the federal and provincial governments must be foremost in their minds. All the Cree First Nations of James Bay have probably heard of breaches to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. But did you know that the pages detailing breaches to the Agreement, when piled, is actually higher than the Agreement itself? This tells us that we must be ever more careful in future dealings with any non-Cree party.

Make no mistake about it, there will be offers and they will be tempting. As tempting as an ice cream on a hot summer day. But let us not forget that an ice cream melts on a hot summer day. So you must eat it fast and then there isn't any left. You're back where you started which is why ice cream stands make such good money in the summer. Then again winter comes along and ice cream sales fall and you remember the hot summer days. How good they were.

Let's not look back at the hot summer days with longing. This is the Cree future that we are looking at and it's part of our responsibility. In this we are all equal whether you're a trapper, labourer, teacher, Elder, youth, whatever—it is all the same because we are all Cree.

The Cree Vision Gathering has provided a unique opportunity for all Crees to participate in that future. The local workshops that will be appearing in Cree communities in the near future are a continuation of that process, that vision. If you do not participate, then you have no right to complain in the future. This is your opportunity as a Cree, so make the most of it. Make it your priority to add to the Cree Vision your ideas, aspirations, goals, objectives and hopes for a better tomorrow. Make it your priority to look at those proposals and tell Cree leaders what you want to see down the road.

Your descendants depend on you and the Cree First Nations (presently of Quebec) depend on you.

BY WILL NICHOLLS

the Nation

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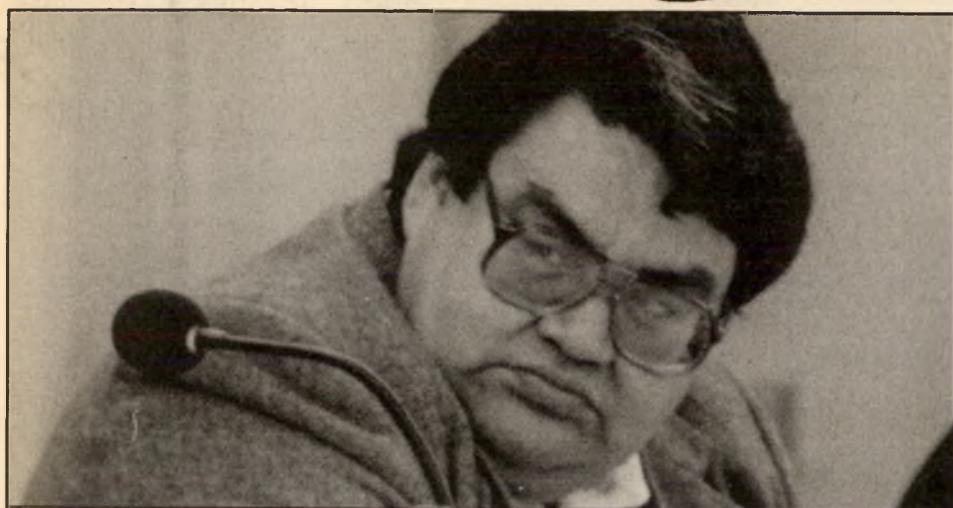
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POLICE SITUATION "INTOLERABLE": CHIEF DIAMOND

The police situation in the Cree communities is "intolerable," says Waskaganish Chief Billy Diamond.

"The Waskaganish First Nation has been forced to use funding identified for other purposes in order to finance its policing services. This situation is intolerable, unacceptable and cannot continue any more," writes Chief Diamond in letters sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien and then-Premier Daniel Johnson on Sept. 7.

The letters were sent along with copies of a Band Council resolution in which the Waskaganish First Nation sets up its own Peacekeeping Force. In the resolution, the band also "asserts its authority over all Waskaganish Cree Traditional Land including all Category IA, IA-N, IB, IB Special, II, III lands as well as all offshore islands, all intervening waters and shorelines."

The resolution goes on to say that Waskaganish "declares its sovereign and full governmental powers and authority over this Waskaganish Cree Traditional Land which has been governed and controlled by the Waskaganish Council from time immemorial."

The new Peacekeeping Force is to enforce the band's authority over all this land.

"We had to take into consideration the security of the community and the safety of the people," Chief Billy Diamond told *The Nation*.

"As a local government, in good conscience, we could not just suspend police services."

Cree constables walked off their jobs on Sept. 1 after talks with the Quebec government on a policing agreement broke down. Crees were seeking more funding, more constables and more powers for their constables.

BY ALEX ROSLIN

Until a final agreement is reached between Crees and Quebec on policing, Waskaganish will be picking up the tab for the Peacekeeping Force. Cree communities have been without outside funds since April 1, when Quebec stopped its funding.

WASHINGTON VISIT INFLAMES SEPARATISTS

Matthew Coon Come provoked the ire of Quebec nationalists on Sept. 19 when he went to Washington and asked a U.S. audience to keep an eye on Quebec's treatment of First Nations.

The Grand Chief said he was worried about sovereigntists using violence against First Nations peoples who refuse to be part of an independent Quebec.

Grand Chief Coon Come was in Washington to give a talk at the influential Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Officials of the U.S. State Department were present in the audience. The talk was on the future of First Nations in an independent Quebec.

"We are asking ourselves: Would force be used against the Crees if we affirmed our right to choose," said the Grand Chief. "Sovereignists assure that everything will happen peacefully and reasonably. But they say they're going to form an army. I can only assume that one of the objectives of a Quebec army will be to pacify aboriginal peoples who refuse to separate from Canada."

Grand Chief Coon Come followed this by asking those present to be vigilant in watching developments in Quebec. After his talk, he told reporters the risk of violence is real. "To be recognized as a country, the advisors of the sovereigntists are telling them that they must be perceived as having control over their territory," he said.

State Department officials who were present would not comment beyond reiterating the official U.S. position on separation: They'd prefer a united Canada, but it's up to Quebecers to decide their future.

A Parti Quebecois official at the talk told *La Presse* that Grand Chief Coon Come's talk was "an attempt to create fear." Said PQ spokeswoman Anne Legare: "You can't take this as a serious opinion. Quebec is a democracy and the Americans know it. There is no reason to use violence against citizens who respect the law."

La Presse editorialist Alain Dubuc responded by accusing the Grand Chief of making "incendiary declarations" and saying he was trying to play whites off against each other.

—Nation staff

THE NATION WELCOMES YOUR LETTERS.

Dear sir

Letter to the Editor:

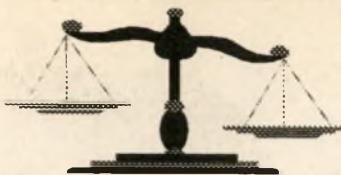
The following letter is a response to La Presse editorialist Alain Dubuc's opinion piece on Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come's recent trip to Washington.

Dear sir,

What basis are you using to qualify as incendiary the statements of Grand Chief Coon Come before the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington ("Silence is golden," Sept. 22, *La Presse*)?

Is this also how you described the statements made last spring by PQ deputy Jacques Brassard (and reported by Maurice Girard of the Canadian Press), envisaging the use of force by an independent Quebec "to guarantee the integrity of its territory and assert its authority within its borders"? Do you really believe it is "ridiculous" for the Crees to be alarmed over these declarations and to bring them to the attention of the Americans?

Is this how you qualified the



incendiary declarations of M. Lucien Bouchard before the same American audience when he was promoting the dismemberment of Canada?

You have the complete text of the Grand Chief's declaration which we sent you the same day. Was this making incendiary statements or describing the rights of the Cree people as enshrined in the Canadian Constitution?

Is it incendiary to tell the Americans what the Quebec government has committed itself to in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement?

Is it incendiary to say that the Crees have the right to choose how they will be governed? Is this not the governmental autonomy that you yourself recognize as "[being inscribed] in an irreversible current"?

Give your readers the opportunity to read the Grand Chief's speech and to

judge for themselves if the declarations are incendiary. Let Quebecers have the chance to think for themselves. Don't debase yourself by using qualifiers that deform our statements and only engender intolerance and incomprehension.

The Crees have the intention of working with the Parti Quebecois government as a normal provincial government.

Neither your position concerning the rights of the Crees nor the policy of the Parti Quebecois on the separation of Quebec should prevent cooperation and good faith between us.

Please accept, dear sir, the expression of my most distinguished sentiments.

**Kenny Blacksmith
Deputy Grand Chief, GCCQ
Vice-President, CRA**

NOTE

In our last issue, we mistakenly referred to Brian Shawana as David Shawana. David is special advisor to the Cree-Naskapi Commissioners. We apologize for giving your brother the credit.

Coming on CBC TV

Maamuitaau This Week

October 8/9

Season Premiere

Maamuitaau returns this week for a new season with a visit to the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec Annual General meeting, held in Eastmain this summer. Emma Saganash hosts this profile of the leaders, the issues and decisions.

October 15/16

A Little Bit of Cree Country

Country singer Vern Cheechoo is profiled through his words and music this week on Maamuitaau. Recorded live at his concert in Wemindji, the singer from Moose Factory talks about his career and his new CD.

See Maamuitaau a 8 a.m. Sundays on CBMT, at 6:45 Saturday and 18:00 Sunday on SRC and Friday nights on CBC North and TVNC.

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On 28th of June at 3:12 am Rosie Lucy Neeposh (Marcel Isik) gave birth to a girl 3 kg 825 gr.

On July 16th at 12:55 pm Joanne Longchap gave birth to a girl 3 kg 630 gr.

On 2nd of July at 2:28 pm Charlotte RabbitSkin (Dion Michel) gave birth to a boy 3 kg 935 gr.

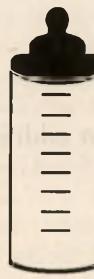
Births at the Hopital de Chibougamau

On July 5th at 2:54 pm Daisy Swallow (Maurice Mianscum) gave birth to a boy 4 kg 500 gr.

On July 7th at 9:17 am Edna Neeposh (Robbie Dick) gave birth to a girl 3 kg 700 gr.

On July 10th at 2:49 pm Betsy Saganash (Mario Lord) gave birth to a boy 3 kg 995 gr.

On 29th of June at 12:15 am Dianna Mianscum (Philippe Shecapio) gave birth to a boy 4 kg 490 gr.





PIERRE LEMAY

WELLNESS PROGRAM PART OF HEALING PROCESS

The only way to get the healing process underway in the Cree communities is by openly talking about issues like family violence and child sexual abuse, says Chief Billy Diamond.

"We have been living in a period of denial," said Chief Diamond in an interview. "The healing has to begin."

"We must be prepared to uncover some of the dark secrets. Keeping secrets has to stop. The only way to do that is to bring it out and share in a healing circle," he said.

Helping Crees achieve that healing has become a big priority for the Waskaganish First Nation. For three years, with little assistance from the government, the Waskaganish Band Council has funded a "community wellness program" which has a broad mandate to help Crees cope with alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence and other social problems.

As part of the wellness program, Waskaganish residents are sent along with their entire family on a 35-day healing program at a native-run treatment centre. Employers are asked by the Band to keep paying the salaries of those who are attending the program.

Last year, six Waskaganish Band employees took the course, and 12 people were sent from Nemaska, which has a similar wellness program. In addition, another 24 people attended a 35-day program closer to home—on Maclean's Island at the mouth of the Nottaway River.

Kenneth Weistche, who coordinates the program as the Waskaganish Band's Community Services Manager, spent 35 days at the High Level Treatment Centre in northern Alberta three

BY ALEX ROSLIN

years ago, along with his wife and three kids. "We didn't know we had a problem," he said. "We didn't know there were so many issues we were burying for so long."

Like many Crees, Kenneth attended residential school for over a decade and this experience left him with a lot of pain. "The anger and resentment I felt I carried for a long time," he said. "I didn't know how to raise kids. They never taught you any parenting skills. I had no role model I could see raising children."

Kenneth said residential school isn't to blame for all of Crees' social problems, but it certainly did enormous harm.

"The abuse that happened in those schools is still being kept inside today," he said. "In residential school, we didn't have the love and care we needed. We lost all that. We were taught to keep silent, not to feel, not to hear anything. So family life was destroyed."

Kenneth called on the government to help fund the wellness initiative, which had a pricetag of \$200,000 last year. The federal government provided only \$117,000 of that and Quebec provided nothing, so Waskaganish had to shell out \$83,000 of its own money. "The government should support it more financially because residential schools were financed by the government," said Kenneth. "They have to take responsibility."

Chief Diamond said the healing process isn't easy, but the time for it is now. "It's a long process. We are not healed yet, but at least we have started a program to get that healing. A lot of tears are involved, a lot of pain, a lot of memories. But at least we started."

PARIZEAU KEEPS NATIVE AFFAIRS

Jacques Parizeau announced his new cabinet on Sept. 26 and kept the sensitive Native Affairs post for himself. David Cliche, elected in a Montreal suburb, will be Parizeau's special Parliamentary secretary on native issues.

Abitibi-West MNA Francois Gendron is getting the Natural Resources Ministry. PQ deputy Richard Le Hir got one of the government's top jobs—Minister of Restructuring the Public Service for an independent Quebec.

Jacques Brassard, the MNA for Lac-St-Jean, got the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife. Crees may recall Brassard as the fellow who said if natives don't go along with an independent Quebec, they will have to face the police and courts.

—Nation staff

ELDERS BANISH WAYWARD YOUTHS

Two native teenagers from Alaska have been banished to two uninhabited islands to spend more than a year in exile.

The 17-year-old youths were sent off with sleeping bags and a few select tools on a fishing boat after brutally beating a pizza delivery man in Everett, Washington. He was left with permanent damage to his hearing and eyesight.

The banishment was decided by 12 band Elders when a state court judge referred the case to a band court. It is the first state criminal case to be referred for a traditional tribal punishment.

The boys were given forks, axes, saws and some food to get them started. They will also have sleeping bags and a wood stove, but will be expected to build their own shelters. They will be checked on periodically, but there will be no way for them to contact anyone off the island. They are being exiled somewhere along the Alexander Archipelago on the south-eastern coast of Alaska, said a report in *Windspeaker*.

—Nation staff

LAWYER PAID A BUNDLE FOR TALKS

A former president of the Liberal Party of Canada will be paid up to \$250,000 to head the federal negotiations with the Mohawks of Oka next year.

Lawyer Michel Robert was appointed to the part-time position by federal

BRIEFS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin last May. There was no public call for applications for the job. Robert still hasn't actually sat down with the Mohawks in person. They are refusing to deal with him. Talks have been held through an intermediary, judge Rejean Paul.

Robert took over the job from Bernard Roy, who held the job under the Conservatives.

Roy, previously Brian Mulroney's chief of staff, works at the prestigious Montreal law firm Ogilvy, Renault, which coincidentally enough is where both Mulroney and Michel Robert work as well.

When Roy held the job, he was criticized because he gave federal compensation money to yet another partner at Ogilvy, Renault who owned land in Oka during the 1990 Oka crisis.

Even though his land was nowhere near the Mohawk barricades and his property was not damaged, Roy's friend still collected thousands of dollars in compensation money.

—Alex Roslin

LAY OFF QUEBEC, MERCRETI TOLD

Ovide Mercredi should stay out of the upcoming Quebec referendum campaign on sovereignty, says Konrad Sioui, the former regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for Quebec and Labrador.

Sioui, who ran unsuccessfully to replace Mercredi as National Chief of the AFN last July, claimed in an interview with *La Presse* that Mercredi would just inflame Quebec nationalists and hurt the cause of Quebec First Nations.

"What I would never want to see, that's national politicians who would come to put oil on the fire," said Sioui, who added that Chief Mercredi received virtually no votes from Quebec Chiefs during his election.

Sioui said that Chief Mercredi often makes statements that "give pleasure to the Orangemen [English-Canadian extremists] and to [Reform leader Preston] Manning."

Sioui also told *La Presse* that Quebec natives are uneasy over the PQ election victory on Sept. 12. Sioui, whose wife, Linda, is Innu, has been working for a month as the government-relations

advisor to the Uashat-Maliotenam Innu First Nation.

—*Nation* staff

INNU BOYCOTT FEDERAL HEARINGS

The Innu people of Nitassinan have pulled out of public hearings into low-level military flights over their land, saying the Canadian government isn't interested in their input.

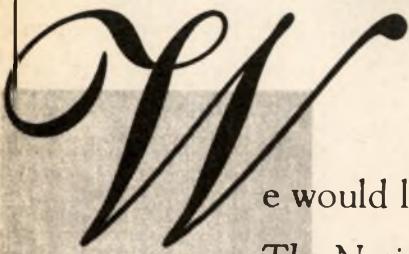
"It's a sham," said Daniel Ashini, director of Innu Rights and Environment for the Innu Nation. "We are extremely disappointed."

Ottawa is holding the hearings because it wants to increase the number of flights from 8,000 per year to 15,000. The government also wants to expand the area where the flights take place from 100,000 square-kilometres to 130,000. The hearings started Sept. 19 in Goose Bay, Labrador.

Ashini, speaking at a conference on boreal forests in Edmonton in late August, criticized a study recently conducted by the Canadian military that said the low-level flights are not causing any major difficulties for local wildlife or the environment.

The Innu leader said the Canadian

YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST



We would like to thank all students who entered The Nation's First Youth Essay Contest, and a big thank-you to all our sponsors and the teachers who encouraged their students to participate.

The winners will be announced in an upcoming issue of *The Nation*. If you didn't enter our contest this time, make sure you enter next time.

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military had no business doing a study on itself in the first place. "It's basically like asking McDonald's to do a study where they must find out whether they make the best hamburgers or not. You know what they're going to say."

Ashini also criticized the hearings because they were scheduled at a time when hunters and trappers are in the bush. "These are people affected by the training and yet the panel is denying them the right to share their expertise and express their views," said Ashini in a report in *Windspeaker*.

—Nation staff

CREE HEALTH ON THE MOVE

There is a new address for the Program and Research Team in Public Health for the Cree Territory of James Bay. The unit has moved in with the Mercury Project of the Cree Health Board at 1610 Ste-Catherine W., office #404, Montreal, H3H 2S2.

You can contact the unit for birth and death forms, reportable disease forms, measuring units sheets and other public health questions at the new phone number (514-989-1013) or fax them at 514-989-7273.

—Nation staff

CHIEFS REACH SELF-GOV'T DEAL

Indian Affairs is one step closer to being dismantled in Manitoba.

After six months of negotiations and 13 rewrites of a ground-breaking agreement on self-government, Manitoba's First Nations Chiefs ratified a preliminary self-government agreement in early September. The agreement covers 60 First Nations and 85,000 status natives. It must now be approved by the federal cabinet.

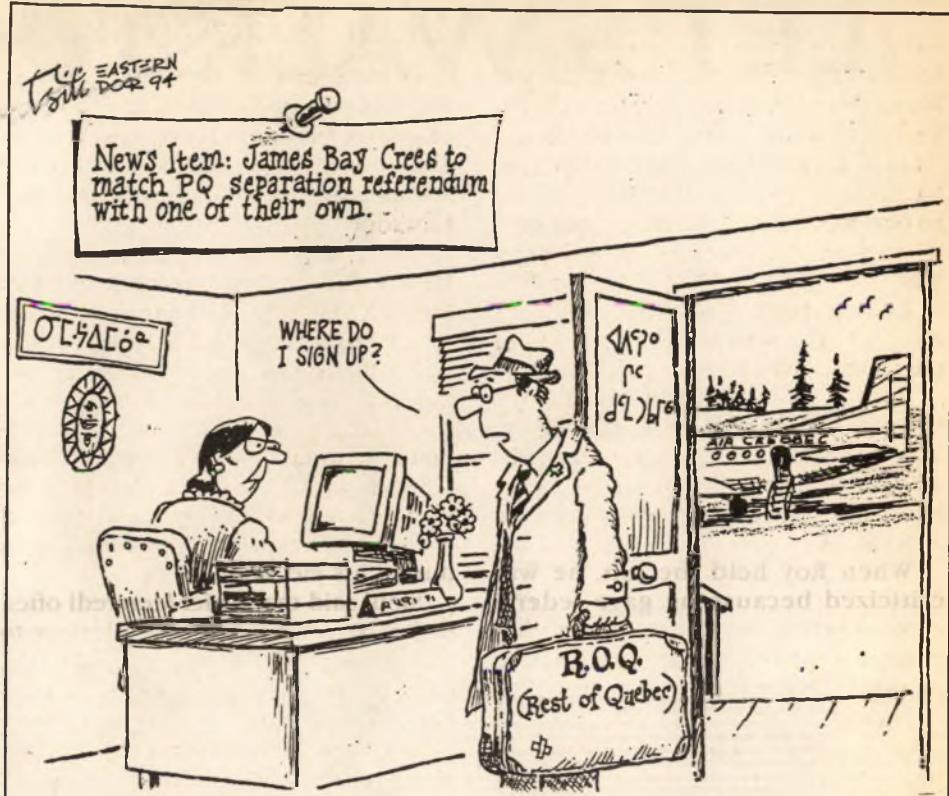
In urging the Chiefs to approve the document, Grand Chief Phil Fontaine of the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs reminded them that "the enemy is not within our organization, but outside... The fight is not between Chiefs. The fight is with government."

But the process hasn't been easy and all the questions Manitoba natives have raised are not yet answered.

"How will self-government be financed?" asked Elder Daniel Beardy from the Lake St-Martin reserve at a public meeting. "Native people have little experience in paying taxes."

Others asked what will happen to family allowances, old age security

CARTOON REPRINTED FROM THE EASTERN DOOR



payments and welfare.

Grand Chief Fontaine answered by saying that Ottawa is still responsible for its treaty obligations, including education, housing and health care. But exactly what those treaty obligations are is still unclear and subject to dispute.

The framework agreement sets a 10-year deadline to develop a mutually agreed upon process for dismantling Indian Affairs and transferring power to First Nations. Each nation will be able to decide for itself how far it will go with self-government and at what pace.

—Nation staff

HEPATITIS PROGRAM FOR NATIVES

A new health care consultation program is helping isolated doctors treat aboriginal people in northern communities who have hepatitis.

The Canada-wide program, now reaching its first birthday, links health care workers in northern communities with a specialist at the University of Alberta Department of Medicine. The program allows the university specialist to recommend treatment without the patient having to travel huge distances.

Up to 30 per cent of the Inuit and Dene populations in Canada have been exposed to hepatitis B—a rate that's 10 times the Canadian average, according

to the University of Alberta.

Hepatitis affects the liver and can be deadly in rare cases. Each type of hepatitis has its own form of transmission—from contaminated water to sexual contact or blood transfusion.

—Nation staff

ZAPATISTAS ON WAR-FOOTING

The Zapatista National Liberation Army has gone on "red alert" in response to what it calls an "attitude of belligerence" on the part of Mexico's government.

The rebel army, made up mostly of indigenous Mayan peasants from the impoverished Mexican state of Chiapas, launched an uprising on Jan. 1. Talks with the government on economic and political reforms have stalled.

The Zapatistas said in a recent press release that the government "is preparing a military solution and is increasing the number of its troops and supplies in the theatre of operations." The Zapatistas ask Mexican soldiers to at least "respect the civilian population."

"On all the territory our forces are ready to repel the assault and have received orders to defend our lands until the last survivor," says the Zapatista press release.

—Nation staff

LET'S WALK TOGETHER

After interviewing Bertie Wapabee, he asked, "So do you have a tear in your eye?" We both laughed, while I reached for a hanky. You don't meet many people more intense than he is. That power he has is now going to be put to work on behalf of the Cree youth and the many problems they face. Bertie was elected vice-chair of the Cree Nation Youth Council at the Youth and Elders Conference held in Eastmain in August.

by Alex Roslin

Bertie, who until recently worked in Nemaska as a Youth Protection officer, spoke of many things in our interview, but he kept returning to one thing—the need for change in Cree society. A change in the direction of the leadership, a return to traditional Cree values and a stop to the destruction of the land. "Whatever has been destroyed, I start to feel a little less," he said. "It hurts to see clearcutting. It hurts to see rivers being dammed, polluted. Those things hurt."

As Bertie describes it, it is dawn for the Cree Nation. He sees a profound awakening underway among the Cree people, especially among the youth and Elders. And he feels he is a part of it. "I do have that spirit that tells me there needs to be change and I have to be part of it. That feeling is there."

"There needs to be change. We all have to wake up together, open our eyes together, stand up together, walk together, walk side by side. Nothing could bring us down if that happens," he said.

The Nation: What kind of a feeling did you get from the Youth and Elders Conference in Eastmain?

Bertie Wapabee: I don't know anything...

It's a good question. I could say that of all the assemblies that have been before, this one was very, very different from all the rest. The way the Elders have sat with us all through that time.

The feeling I got there was that something was about to start. The Elders have talked about bringing back the way of life of the Crees, bringing back the old ways. The youth, when they talked, that was basically what we heard. This is what we want.

We want to see the old ways back. We want to live the way we lived before. It's hard to explain, I guess. There was a feeling of a new beginning. I know there's a lot of talk about a new beginning at all the conferences, but this one was different. I had a good feeling that something was going to start there and I still feel that today.

Do you think there's an awakening going on now?

Yes, this is one of the things I always hoped for. One time, I guess, I got into trouble for trying to wake up the people. Right now, there are a lot of people who are starting to come together, people who are out for the same cause and want to see change and want things done.

Those are little people who are starting to come together, starting to be reunited, in a way. But for me, I met a lot of young people my age, talked to Elders, talked to youth who are seeing the same things I see right now.



NEIL DIAMOND

There needs to be a big change in the Cree world today. In a way, a lot of things are bit by bit destroying our people and our people see that. Everybody seems to be aiming at the same people, our leaders, to do something about what's going on right now.

So we do have a lot of new people I never met before, who I never heard of, who are talking about the same thing and have the same way of thinking—that there needs to be a big change in our society today.

What do you think is the main thing that has to be changed?

The way of living, I guess. So far, we're going in the same direction, either trying to follow the modern society today, technology and all that stuff, going to school, destroying the land, money and success. It's too many years that our people have been confused. In a way we're trying to go back to the road we were on. We were supposed to protect the land.

There's a lot of things that need to be changed—the ways of the leadership.

What do you think the leaders do that is wrong?

Well, not exactly wrong—but a change in direction. Aiming at other things. A lot of them are too involved in the upper world, the political world. I would say the leadership should go in the direction that their people were informing them or keeping them up to date. Basically, helping their people to heal. That's what we need now.

Do you think there's also a strong feeling that there's been too much destruction of the land and that maybe more should be done about that?

I guess all of us, we're waiting for the last minute to really do something about it. A few rivers and a lot of trees

have been cut down, and mountains have been blown up. There's more of that coming.

Our people right now are sort of talking in their seats and not really doing anything about it. To me, there's a lot of things I can think of I could do to try and protect the land. But in a way, I don't have the power.

One thing I would like to see for sure is that our people could really have control over the land. It was once given to us to protect, it was once given to us to use for our own good, for our health, for our people and our children.

I do have that spirit that tells me there needs to be change and I have to be part of it.

Do you think the things you're saying, is that how the youth are thinking these days, that there needs to be a change?

Yes, there really needs to be a big change in all corners of the Cree world—in leadership, in the way of thinking. There are too many people today who are confused, not knowing which way to go. One way would be for a young man taking alcohol and drugs, not knowing where they're going. Another way would be leaving all those things aside, going back to the land, going back to the way of living of the Crees.

Is that something the youth are really focusing on now?

Yes, I've heard a lot of youth talk about that right now, that something needs to be done, for those words to be heard by



PIERRE LEMAY

the leaders. There's a lot of words that come out of a young man or a young woman who wants change, something to be done in the community.

There has been a lot of talk about youth in the communities. In many ways, a lot of that is just words. There's no action happening after those words have been spoken.

This summer, I went to the Gathering at Old Nemaska and I was part of the Youth and Elders General Assembly. Being part of those two gatherings, I could say there's a strong feeling that people want to do something. I said something at the Gathering—that we've been talking all this time, trying to make changes, trying to do something else, for our people to stand up for what they believe in, for what was theirs to protect and is still there.

It's time to take our papers and stand up and start walking.

Why do you think it's just been words and no action so far?

Well, I remember when I came back from the General Assembly, a recognized leader said something like: Whatever the youth talked about over there at the General Assembly of the Grand Council, we hear that every year, we hear that every assembly, there's always a youth coming up to say things like that. It always stays the same, after that nothing happens.

Maybe nothing happens because they don't do anything. They have a role to play.

There are a few Chiefs who are starting to wake up and admit there are problems with the leadership. That's something good to hear.

Even though there's a lot of problems, it sounds like something very positive is going on, something very profound. Do you have that feeling?

Oh yeah. If I really look at it right now, this is what I'm doing. I look at it this way.

The PQ won the election and there's the possibility that there's going to be a referendum and there's a possibility again that there's going to be a "yes" vote and Quebec could go ahead with their plan. In a way, those are the kinds of things that are really starting to push our people, telling all of us Crees that we should really do something now, we can't sit around any more. People are starting

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LET'S WALK TOGETHER...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

to open their eyes now.

And I'm only one of them. There's more and more people who are really starting to wake up. It's good to see. A lot of those people have a lot of experience in the past 20 years or so. A lot of them experienced those years, being involved in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Dis-Agreement.

Even the Elders are really starting to open up, because they haven't really done that in the past few years, I guess. They sort of put aside what they had and followed what everybody else was following, trying to live in the modern world and trying to survive with money.

Following that road, you don't even see what's happening in your backyard. Somebody might be building a dam or looking for rocks or drilling a hole in your backyard or cutting a few trees here and there. A lot of those things are, I guess, starting to make our people open their eyes a little more.

There is that sense right now, where I was and among the people I talked to, that people are ready to accept what's happening right now and do something about it, make that change. There are people who are prepared to do that. Even myself, I am prepared to see something like that.

One of my plans right now is to go back in the bush. Right now, I want to be involved in that change. Not to make a name for myself, but just to be a part of it. Because I do have that spirit that tells me there needs to be change and I have to be part of it. That feeling is there.

So whatever happens tomorrow or whatever happened yesterday, something needs to be done today.

You were just elected vice-chair of the Cree Nation Youth Council. What kinds of things would you like to do to put your ideas into action?

I like going to the young people and hearing what they have to say. For myself, I never had the title or the power to go to such an assembly and address whatever my concerns were.

Now, I do have my concerns still today and there's a lot of young people out there who have concerns about many issues. And I'm starting to hear a lot of what the youth want, what they want to see, what they would like to do. I hear a lot of that.

Some of those things they brought to me I have to bring to the table—the Grand Chief's table or the Grand Council's table or even the Chief's table. Some of those things we can do ourselves, as long as we have the authority of the people. We don't have to have the authority of the Grand Chief.



If we do let go
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people.

There's a lot of things that I've been dreaming to do for a long time. Now, I have a title and now I can take action.

Some Cree leaders say the youth have a certain line on issues, but that because they're young they don't have the experience to analyze those issues properly. How much wisdom do you think the youth can bring to issues?

The way I have been taught and one of the things I taught myself, is that no matter how old you are, if you are newborn, or a young man or woman, all ages right up to being an Elder, if all of you are together in one room, in the eyes of the Creator there is no one who is better than the other. We are all equal.

This is how I have seen myself ever since I stopped doing some things I was not supposed to be doing. I was involved with a lot of alcoholism. Once I stopped doing that, I started to learn that all of us are equal. There's no one who is better than the other.

So my response would be we are all equal. If the Grand Chief sits over there, with a big table and a nice seat, and there's a young baby that's crawling around, the Grand Chief can still learn something from that baby.

As one of the youth of the Cree Nation, there's a lot of things I see up ahead. Right now, where we are, if we do let go the clearcutting, if we do let go a few more rivers, a few more mountains, a few more trees, the more things that are destroyed, the less we are as people.

Being young doesn't mean I don't have experience. As long as my heart is there, looking at the land, seeing that something is happening to it, that someday my grandchildren may not see what I saw, those trees that are being cut down, those rivers that are being dammed and those mountains that have been blown up, those are the things that open my eyes.

It's not something I have to look at on paper or on TV, wherever. It's not the leaders who are going to tell me I don't have experience. I don't need experience. I have a life. I have feelings for the land. I know my spirit is part of what I see out there. It's part of the land. In a way, they all belong together. We are all a part of Creation.

Whatever has been destroyed, I start to feel a little less. It hurts to see clearcutting. It hurts to see rivers being dammed, polluted. Those things hurt.

As long as we have feelings, that's what counts. As long as we see there's something out there, the land, we have to do something. As a young man, this is what I feel—that I have to do something to protect it. So my grandchildren can see what I'm seeing, so my grandchildren can walk on the path where I used to walk. All these things.

There is this talk about experience. Whatever it is that these leaders say, whatever words they use to say these things, they are

the ones who don't know anything. They do know something, but they are too involved in the higher level of modern society. They have to come home, this is what I'm trying to say. They have to come home to their people so our people can walk together with them.

They are not higher than us. And we are not higher than them. We are equal. This is how we all have to see ourselves—no matter what colour you are, no matter how long you went to school, no matter how long you went to the bush, no matter how old you are, no matter how special you are. We're all equal.

Nobody can tell me I don't know anything. Maybe they're right. But I do know this—I do have feelings for the land.

What kinds of experiences did you have when you were on the land?

I remember I was eight years old when I was first taken to the school. My parents wanted me to go to school, but I didn't want to go to school at all. I didn't want to have anything to do with school.

I remember telling my parents or somebody else that I wanted to go home. I remember what I thought my home was—I thought my home was in the bush. Still today, my thought is still there. My home is out there.

I guess since I was born, I've always been in the bush until the time when my parents decided to take me to school. I had no choice then. And if I did, if I had the choice to go back to the land, I would. Even right now, I still have the choice. But if I go to the bush, next thing I know this mountain near my cabin or my tent or my teepee all of a sudden explodes and you see a few guys with hard hats around. It's one of the things I don't want to expect.

I don't want to see anything like that around where I'm going to live. I don't want to see strangers starting to put pickets on the trees or the rivers saying they're going to cut all those trees, they're going to blow up this mountain, they're going to dam this river. Those things I don't want to see.

I always try my best not to have anything against anybody. Still today, I'm fighting myself. Those people or Hydro-Quebec or whoever wants these dams, they do understand how we live, they do understand why we want to protect the land, why we want to stop the damming or clearcutting. The way for them to keep on their way of life is to have success and lots of money—it's the only way to survive. That's their way of life.

In our way, it doesn't matter if you don't have any money—you can still go in the bush. Now, there are two kinds of people or two different ways of living, wanting the land for two different reasons. One reason is to protect it and go there to be free. The other reason is for them to go there to cut all the trees or make the dam there so money comes out of it. That's their way of surviving.

So what do we do—both of us, I guess? Hydro-Quebec, or whoever these people are, have to come to an understanding. Which way is better? Is it better to keep the land and make it a home for everybody? Or is it better to destroy the land and make no more land any more? What are we going to do?



NEIL DIAMOND

Something people are talking about more and more is the social issues in the communities. That's something you've been working on quite a bit. I'm wondering what your own past experiences have taught you about how to deal with those social issues and what you would tell a young person about how to deal with those problems?

It's going to be a long story... [laughs] Let's say we will start off with what goes on in the communities. For the past year I've been working for Youth Protection [with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services]. When I started working, I didn't know what was really going on in the communities. I had an idea, but I wasn't too sure.

I'm not only going to talk for Nemaska, but for all the Cree Nation. These are the things that have been going on for quite some time. Social issues are a very big thing. A lot of people talk about wanting to do something.

The way I see it, in order for someone to do something, in order for someone to help the communities, one's got to start with

himself, with herself. There's a lot of talk about bringing people from the outside. But in a way, I do believe that our own people can do those things. Our own people can heal themselves. Our people.

So many things are happening in the communities today. There are suicides, attempted suicides, incest, molestation, all kinds of sexual abuse, wife abuse, wife battering or even emotional abuse that some women do to their husbands. A lot of our people carry a lot of pain about something that happened to them in the past. Some of them have even started to do something to other people.

There's a lot of things that I could talk about. There's a man beating up his daughter. There's a man beating up his son. There's a young man raping a few girls here and there, young girls, younger than him. All these things.

Our people need to find a way to look at what's really happening and stop denying that things are really happening in the communities. That's where we are now. A lot of people are denying that these things are happening in their own homes or in their own communities or in their own families. It's time our people accept what's really going on and bring it out.

It's something that's really hard to do, telling someone what happened to you in the past. People don't really know what to do—if they should go to social services or if they should go to somebody else.

It's a very big issue in the Cree Territory today. If I'm not mistaken, the Gathering that's supposed to happen in Mistissini is supposed to deal with social issues. This is one of the things that needs to be addressed in the leadership. Everywhere there are things that need to be done on the social issues and things that need to be done now. It doesn't matter how much money it costs. Maybe you're going to be broke in a few years. But something has to be done.

There's too many things that are happening. There's too many children who are being hurt. There's too many children who are

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Whereas the Members of the Cree Nation of



by William Nicholls

EASTMAIN is breaking new trails on old hunting grounds. At Eastmain's Local Annual General Assembly, two resolutions were passed that deal with traplines and the traditional role of the tallyman. This is the first time that the tallymen have been officially recognized in Band resolutions.

The resolutions lay out the rules and regulations for the users of Eastmain traplines and also concern poaching on the traplines.

Band secretary Redfern Mark-Stewart talked to *The Nation* about these two resolutions.

"People were disturbing the wildlife management of the trapline. Our band members were concerned and wanted a stop put to it," said Redfern.

Redfern said the resolutions apply to everyone, whether they are Native or not. They also apply to people not living in Eastmain and will apply to Hydro-Quebec.

The Hydro-Quebec connection is the scientists who study the James Bay region. They fish, trap and hunt for samples in Cree traplines. Now, they will have to inform the appropriate tallymen before harvesting samples.

"These were the wishes of the Eastmain First Nations members," said Redfern. "The resolutions were made locally but we'd like to see them carried out at a regional level also."

"I hope this works out. In a year, we expect full compliance with the wishes of our members. In the old days these types of resolutions were not necessary, but today people break the rules. That's why these resolutions were passed—to show respect and to honour the traditional role of the tallyman."

Concerning rules and regulations imposed on the users of the Eastmain traplines

Resolution #: 1994/95-23

Proposed by: George W. Gilpin

Seconded by: Luke Tomatuk

Action: Carried

WHEREAS the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain having met at Eastmain, Quebec this 31st day of August, 1994;

WHEREAS the Tallymen have always been considered the rulers in charge of their individual traplines thereby ensuring the protection of the users of the trapline as well as the survival of the waterfowl and all species of wildlife;

WHEREAS the Crees have always, traditionally, respected the commands and instructions given by a Tallyman in respect to his trapline and have always requested permission to hunt and to use the resources of a trapline from the Tallyman to which it belonged;

WHEREAS the Tallymen of the Eastmain

Eastmain having met at Eastmain

Cree traditional territory have brought to the attention of the Council and Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain their concerns with the constant depletion of their traplines and threats to the survival of the waterfowl and other species of wildlife by the destruction of the feeding grounds of those species;

WHEREAS the Tallymen of the Eastmain Cree traditional territory have realized in the last few years that the rules of the Tallymen are sometimes disregarded due to the rapidly declining retention of the Cree traditional way of life;

WHEREAS the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain recognize the importance of the commitment to and respect of the Cree way of life and the Cree traditions, particularly with regards to the Tallyman and the survival of the species;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain hereby recognize the fundamental role of the Tallymen as protectors of the land and the rulers of the traplines on the Eastmain traditional territory;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain demand that all users of the traplines located in the Eastmain traditional territory specifically notify the Tallymen in charge of the respective trapline of their intention to venture into a definite trapline

in order to hunt, trap or fish in this trapline; such entry as well as the time spent in his trapline shall be approved by the Tallyman prior to departure of the users for the trapline;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain recognize the importance of the rules and regulations imposed by the Tallyman with regards to the use of the trapline and hereby demand that such rules and regulations be totally and unequivocally respected by all users of the traplines;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain also recognize the importance of imposing rules and regulations specifically addressed to protect the feeding grounds



NEIL DIAMOND

of the waterfowl and species and for that specific purpose specifically demand that all rules imposed by the Tallyman preventing the use of mechanical contraptions (such as skidoos, four-wheelers, etc.) and the collection of all garbage be strictly abided by all users of the traplines located in the Eastmain Cree traditional territory;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain have agreed to the Fall Goose Hunt commencing on September 15, 1994; however the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain also recognize the authority of the individual Tallyman to allow the opening of his trapline prior to that date or at a subsequent date due to specific conditions and location of his trapline;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain demand that all users of the traplines located in the Eastmain Cree traditional territory receive permission from the Tallymen in respect of the allocation of the species to be hunted and/or trapped prior to the killing of these waterfowl species or wildlife animals;

THAT the Members of the Cree Nation of Eastmain agree that all rules and regulations imposed by the Tallymen be mandatory and failure to obey these rules and regulations may result in the immediate expulsion of the users from the trapline;

THAT the Eastmain Cree Trappers Association be and is hereby requested to do all action necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Concerning the poaching on the traplines

Resolution No.: 1994/95-13

Proposed by: Sinclair Moses

Seconded by: Charlie Mayappo

Action: Carried

WHEREAS the Tallymen have always been considered the rulers in charge of their individual traplines;

WHEREAS the Crees have always respected the commands and instructions given by a Tallyman in respect to his trapline and have always requested permission to hunt and to use the resources of a trapline from the Tallyman to which it belonged;

WHEREAS the Tallymen of the Eastmain Cree traditional territory have brought to the attention of the Members of the 1994 4th Local Annual General Assembly the problems they are encountering in their traplines which are

being depleted by hunters and trappers from other communities who are using the trapline without first requesting permission from the Tallymen;

WHEREAS the Members of the 1994 4th Local Annual General Assembly deem it appropriate to communicate with the Cree Trappers Association as well as Tallymen from other communities to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to preserve the traplines;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

THAT the Members of the 1994 4th Local Annual General Assembly request that a letter be sent on behalf of the Eastmain Tallymen to the Cree Trappers Association, to the Local Cree Trappers Association Committee of the other eight communities

as well to each Tallyman of the Cree traditional territory informing them of the concerns of the Eastmain Tallymen for the unauthorized use of their traplines;

THAT this letter also specify that any user of the traplines must first request the permission of the Tallymen, in respect of the Cree traditions;

THAT the Chairman of the Cree Trappers Association, Mr. Edward I. Gilpin Jr., be requested to table this letter at the next Annual General Assembly of the Cree Trappers Association;

THAT Chief Kenneth Gilpin be requested to send this letter on behalf of the Eastmain Tallymen and do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution;

THAT Chief Kenneth Gilpin be requested to report on this matter at the 1995 5th Local Annual General Assembly.

from the basement to the BALLROOM



NEIL DIAMOND

BY ERNEST WEBB

There was recently a pow wow at the Sheraton Centre in the main ballroom. It was part of a conference held there.

It is significant for me, because I see the progression and acceptance, if you will, of our culture as native people.

It is an impressive room with big chandeliers, wall-to-wall carpeting, silver pots for the coffee. It's not so much the pow wow itself but where it was. The sense of pride I had was overwhelming as they did the Grand Entry. Especially with the people there. The people there had healed themselves and they carried with them our *Indianness*. Something which is lost when one needs healing.

The pow wow was at the end of a conference organized by the National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics, which is an organization dedicated to healing the multi-generational effects of substance abuse.

The love permeated throughout the room. There were some visitors who looked like they had never attended a pow wow before. They got to see the beautiful side

"THE POWER AND THE FEELING IN THAT BALLROOM WERE OVERWHELMING."

of who native people are. There was a room full of people who a short while ago were, sorry to put it bluntly, drunks. And here they were now, healed or struggling to heal.

The Mohawk hosts from Kahnawake were great. There was a contingent from the Longhouse. They shared stories, prayers and dances. The social dances got the crowd involved. The power and the feeling in that ballroom were over-whelming. Sometimes we might take different aspects of our culture for granted when they are in their usual places. But here we were in the frea-kin' Sheraton for a pow wow. It was special.

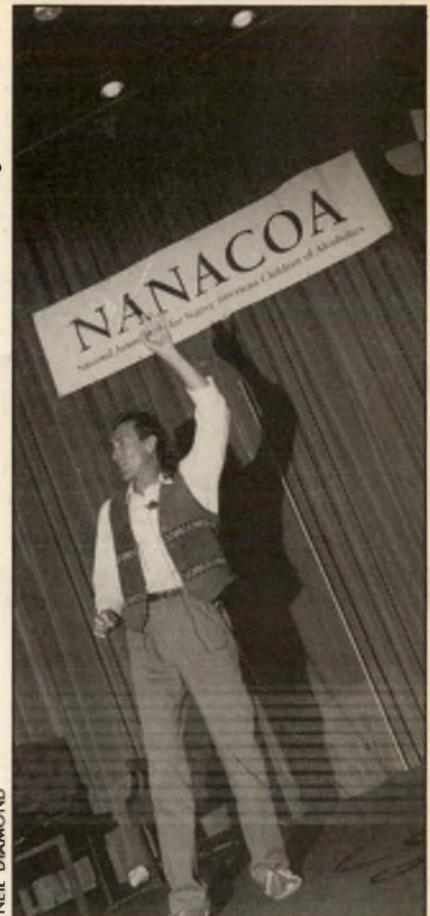
It was the same feeling in the student union building. There was a Native awareness week put on by the students at McGill in 1991. Unaware of the protocol, the organizers had planned to have the drummers play in a bar, but the drum group said they couldn't perform in a room where alcohol was

being served. So they scrambled to find another room. The only one they could find was in the basement. But it didn't matter. The same feelings were in there. But I thought how unfortunate that more couldn't learn or participate.

And here we are in the ballroom. People from all over were there. I met a Cree from Montana, whose language sounded very similar to ours. The feeling one gets as a native or non-native during those happenings, whether they are back home, or at the ballroom or in the basement for that matter, is special.

And from my observations we have begun to conquer. We have begun to conquer, with our hearts, with our love, patience and wisdom. The healing with native people was only the first step of many. Now we can begin to conquer.

Not by "packing heat" but by spreading the word. Only when we start using our minds, words and actions and most of all our spirit can we begin to make a difference. It's starting.



NEIL DIAMOND



NEIL DIAMOND

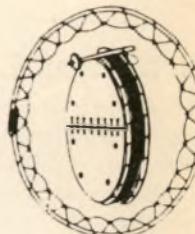
GRAND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Δo-**ᓇ᳚ ᐃ᳚ የ᳚ ስ᳚** (JVb)

Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec)
Grand Conseil des Cris (du Québec)

△P P C C R I E
CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ADMINISTRATION RÉGIONALE CRIE



CRA
ARC

CANADA COAST TO COAST

We have always been the majority inhabitants of our territory, which we have never left. We have never been involved in an armed conflict or uprising with Canada or any colonial power. We have never, until recently, faced any political threat to our territory or our existence as a people. We have our own language, culture, history, legal system, social structure, traditions and beliefs. We have always conceived of ourselves as one people, tied together by the land we share and care for, and upon which our survival has always depended.

We Crees are not "nationalists." That concept does not exist in the Cree language. Our tie to the land is not just political, it is also physical. We are part of our lands.

In 1977, the Parliament of Canada simultaneously enshrined permanent Cree rights as citizens of Canada and residents in the Province of Quebec, as well as the other rights contained in the treaty. These terms and conditions may only be amended with the consent of the original signatories. Our relationship in perpetuity with the federal Crown and Parliament are, in law at least, not subject to unilateral abrogation or transfer.

The Parti-Québécois, now the Government of Quebec, states that we have no rights in our land, that these have all been extinguished through centuries of colonial acts. It always fails to mention, however, the extinctions and surrenders of the territorial rights of Quebecers at the Treaty of Paris and again when Quebec joined Canada in 1867.

Fundamentally, there is no right for a portion of a State to secede either in international or in Canadian Constitutional law. To accomplish its stated goal, the Government of Quebec will either have to persuade the Canadian State to amend its Constitution to dismember itself, or Quebec will have to secede unilaterally. In either case, we intend to ensure that the constitutional and human rights of the Aboriginal peoples are not violated.

Nevertheless, the secessionist government in Quebec has made public its program to separate from Canada, which will formally place Quebec on the course of secession. Within one year, Premier Parizeau has promised to hold a referendum on separation from Canada. If there is a "yes" vote on the referendum - even a 50-percent plus one "yes" vote - Quebec promises to separate. If Canada refuses, then Quebec will make a unilateral declaration of independence, and attempt to impose its own laws on an exclusive basis, throughout the territory of the existing province.

As an Indian, I am terribly disturbed by this scenario, which

makes no allowance for the rights of my people.

The secessionists are simply saying that the Crees may not choose to stay in Canada. They are saying that whether we like it or not, and with or without our consent, we are aboard the canoe of independence, and may not stay where we are on the dry land of Canada. We are being told that we must join with the secessionists in their adventure to redress their historic wrongs.

My people are worried. At our Cree Nation Assembly last month they gave the mandate to hold a Cree referendum if Quebec holds its promised referendum on secession. We Crees do indeed intend to make our own choice, to assert a right of self-determination at least equal to that claimed by Quebec.

These double-standards are deeply disturbing, and make us fear for the future of our people. Premier Parizeau claims territorial integrity for Quebec, but not for Canada, a recognized State. He objects to the idea of a nation-wide Canadian referendum on Quebec secession, stating that Quebecers have the right to decide for themselves. However, when my people take a similar position and explain that the future of the Crees can only be determined by the Crees themselves, and that the Crees will not permit themselves to be forcefully integrated into the entire Quebec population, Mr. Parizeau demurs.

The Aboriginal peoples, and the Crees in particular, have indeed now been recognized as crucial elements that could prevent the secession of Quebec. But it was not until May of this year that the Canadian federal Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, finally stated the obvious, and confirmed the right of the Aboriginal peoples and their territory to choose to remain in Canada.

After all, Mr. Irwin explained, the Crees have been on their lands for 5,000 years. The Canadian Prime Minister stated that Mr. Irwin was doing his job, and that as long as there was a Canadian Constitution, the federal government would have a special relationship with Aboriginal peoples. He also observed that while Quebec's borders as a province are guaranteed in the Canadian Constitution, there was no guarantee that an independent Quebec would have the same borders as the present province of Quebec.

We are confident that our position in law is clear. The Canadian Constitution recognizes us as a people.

An act of secession by Quebec would constitute a sufficient violation of the Crees' fundamental rights for us to invoke an external right of self-determination, and give the Crees, at the very least, the choice to remain in Canada.

Cree Gathering

by William Nicholls

On September 13th, Crees gathered to examine their future. To look at Cree aspirations and hopes in the face of the Parti Quebecois political platform of separation.

Kenny Blacksmith called it a "people's forum." It's official name was the Cree Vision Gathering and it took place at the Old Nemaska Site.

From September 13-16, Crees of all ages and occupations came together to discuss the future of the Cree world. The problems they talked about were not simply the problems of 20 years ago.

Now was a time to look at Cree issues. Among them, the present and future orientation of the GCCQ/CRA, Cree self-government, regional and local government issues, jurisdiction, changing Cree lifestyles and of course the PQ plans for sovereignty.

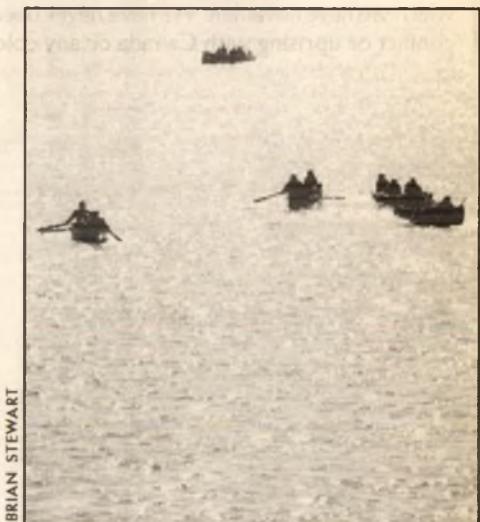
Thomas Jolly, one of the facilitators, had a workshop group of Elders. He said discussions centred on changes they had seen and on the land. Thomas, who is from Nemaska, said, "In the end the message was very clear. There was a need for people to go back to the land. This was not only to

look at our roots but to heal body and soul."

Kenny Blacksmith told *The Nation* he enjoyed working in the atmosphere of the Old Nemaska Site. "This site brought out a good feeling in the people. I think the environment helped people talk. They discussed a lot of important issues like the future orientation of our political structures, defining local vs. regional governments, defining the roles of government, adapting to the changes and issues before us, etc.," said Kenny.

"I mean the GCCQ/CRA and such was designed for a situation that occurred 20 years ago. Things are different today and we have to adapt to the changes and issues before us. I feel that many people looked at redesigning our system to meet today's realities.

"I'm including the pending Parti Quebecois referendum and the threat of separation to the Crees. They were issues that were taken into account in the discussions. This was a continuation of the Annual General Assembly discussions and resolutions,"



BRIAN STEWART

said Kenny.

As for the idea of Crees having their own referendum, Blacksmith said: "We'll work with that issue as it evolves. We'll certainly act when it is the best time to do it. That's even if it is needed because we will be allowing the Quebec government time. We'll be looking at how it deals with Cree issues. After all they are a new government. We are willing to give them a chance."

In the meantime, Kenny hopes the momentum seen at the Cree Gathering continues.

The nine communities will be holding local workshops themselves. The purpose will be to look at the future. The Grand Council has pledged to continue to assist where needed, and will make available information and guidelines also.

Romeo Saganash will be tabling a report this week. There are rumours that a one-year position for a full-time co-ordinator to facilitate the local workshops is being considered.

I voted for the land

BY ROBBIE MATTHEW SR.

"There is one greater power than all the powers we know—the power from above."

Chisasibi Elder Robbie Matthew Sr. was asked to comment on the Sept. 12 Quebec election won by the Parti Quebecois

Myself, I was not really concerned about who won and who lost. Myself, I was more concerned about what are we going to do about the land issue. That was my number-one priority—the land.

I was thinking like this myself. I didn't vote myself—for anybody. I voted myself for the land itself. The Elders are telling us if we want to govern ourselves with self-government or self-determination, what are you going to use if you run out of land? This is a very good example for our young generation to look at about the concerns of the Elders.

And also they say, what are we going to teach concerning the land if there is no more land for us to teach our young generation? What are we going to use if we run out of land first? And this is a strong argument I guess I would say to my concerns.

And the elections, as far as I am concerned, I was not really worried about who won and who lost—as long as the priority is land, number one is land. Because we cannot do anything without the land. This is very important, especially for the voters and the leaders who are going to lead Quebec.

This comes from the Elders' side—what are we going to do if we run out of land? Who's going to teach?

This is a very strong argument, I guess, understanding how these Elders look at the land issue. Because they say if the Cree Nation wants to self-determine or govern itself, it must have this land as the priority. Without the land, you cannot govern yourself. You don't have anything to go by. In other words, you cannot teach if you do not have the land. You cannot teach the traditional way of teaching, because you cannot have contact with the land because there's no more.

And this is, I would say, a very special view, I guess, from the Elders. To me, it's a very good lesson for me, too,

because I've always maintained the land issue. To me, it was number one. What are we going to do if we run out of land and if we don't have anything to go by?

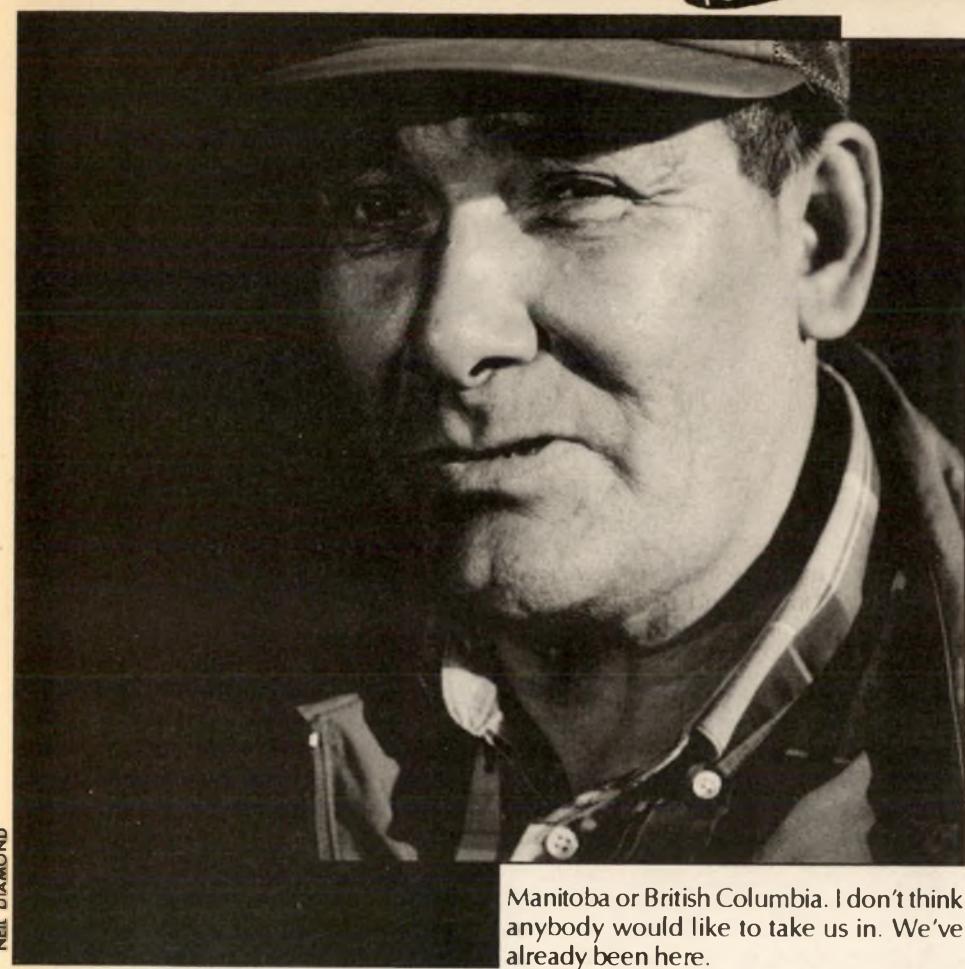
Because as the Elders put their concerns, they said: When you look at the land itself, they were talking about this to the young people, you must protect the land. Because it's like protecting our mother. You wouldn't want if someone wants to hurt your mother, you wouldn't just watch. You would have to defend that person. This is the same thing with the land too. You cannot just watch and see the land being destroyed.

You have to say something now because it's coming to the stage now that we have to use the land to govern ourselves and to teach our young generation our traditional teachings. We want to save that land for that purpose.

And about the elections, it doesn't matter to us, the Elders, who won and who lost. As long as there is land in our territory, this is our number one priority. We need the land to teach our young generation and the generation that is not born yet.

When you have to deal with the governments and the big corporations, we have a hard time trying to put something across to them. We may have to put it like this: Myself, I've always tried to come up with something that the white society would understand about what we mean about the land. It's like this: When we have a bank and we need to put the money into the bank for our future use, this is the same thing with the land issue. We must have something for our young generation to use, to develop their own strategy. That's what we have come up with to create understanding, to put it across to other nationalities of people. This is the same thing with the land issue.

We must save that land. Because this is where we got the education, the personal education, the traditional education. It's just like money. You have to look into things like that to make other people understand why you are so concerned about the land. Why are you so concerned about the money in the bank? You want to save that for your own, not only for yourself, but your young children. This is the same thing



NEIL DIAMOND

Manitoba or British Columbia. I don't think anybody would like to take us in. We've already been here.

I don't think one bit, to my dreams I guess, that Quebec can do this. He cannot separate from Canada. Because he doesn't have the power. Maybe he thinks he's got the power. But there is one greater power than all the powers we know—the power from above. He cannot overtake that power unless he is given that power from above.

My understanding is that Quebec cannot succeed. He cannot succeed because why separate the nation? If a nation wants to separate, it will be a smaller group. We are told when a smaller nation does not have anything to go by, he will fall because he doesn't have any guidance. This is what makes Canada a strong nation—working together.

To me, even though people think Quebec might separate, I don't think one bit Quebec can overcome this, this power we have, the power from above. He cannot do that unless he is given the power to do this, because I don't think he has the power to do it.

He has the power by using whatever, like money, but I don't think he can do this. I don't think our Creator will go along with that. Because we must remember—our Creator gave us life here, every day, and

with the land issue too. This is how I guess other people will understand why we are so concerned about the land.

I UNDERSTAND myself very well that we cannot go anywhere else. Because this is where we came from. Canada is our homeland, our mother earth. We cannot go anywhere else. We have to educate the white society about why we do not want anything like separation.

We cannot go anywhere. Because we were here before. We were the first ones to have been here. Our ancestors have been here. The other nationalities of people arrived here later on, I guess.

With separation, I don't think we have the chance to go anywhere else because nobody would want to take us if we want to move from Quebec to Ontario or

*"I don't think one bit
that Quebec can do
this—he cannot separate
from Canada."*

we should learn; and we should learn to appreciate what we have, rather than separation. I don't think Quebec will be given that privilege. That's my strong argument about separation. I don't think he has the power to do this.

So that's my opinion. And I think myself it's about time that indigenous people across Canada will have to come forward and be as one nation. And this is the only way that we can put the words I guess into Quebec. Quebec cannot separate. Even though he's relying on the resources that we have, like the waters where he gets the power, and the minerals we have, I don't think that won't work.

We as indigenous people have to speak up now. Because it's time. Because we've been silent for I don't know how many years—over a hundred years now. Just sitting down and listening to the governments, taking this land bit by bit.

It's time I guess for us to speak now—or forever hold your peace... [laughs].

We cannot just sit down any more now. We may have to go against this.

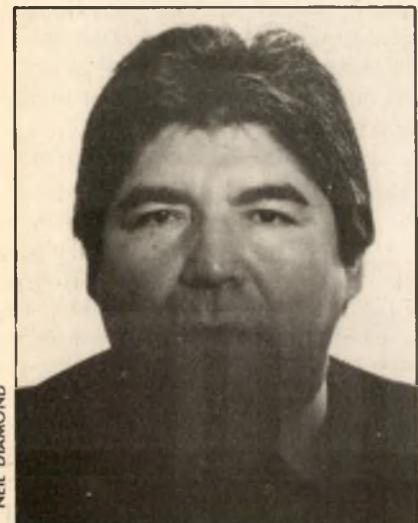
But I don't think for myself, I'm not at least that worried. There is something that we as indigenous people have always observed and maintained—that there is one greater power than the powers on this earth here. There is greater power. I guess you need to ask for that power to be used, not on individuals, but to be understood, how this power should work.

So we as indigenous people also have another thing that we call "power from the north." This is something that has not been revealed or even written about. Someday, you might see that in years to come. We as indigenous people call this power from the north. It's not the electric power—it's something different. It's never been used. It's never been mentioned.

And why I mention this is someday you might see it in that paper you're making, *The Nation*. Someday somebody will write it down and say this is what we've been talking about. That is a strong power, I would say, and we would I guess be blessed from the power above.

—as told to Alex Roslin

International politics and Indigenous peoples



NEIL DIAMOND

T

he Crees have been active in international politics for many years. Most prominent of these actions was the fight against Hydro-Quebec's proposed Great Whale project.

As a result of this confrontation, we are known in the United States, Europe, South American countries and Japan, among others. The Crees have also made numerous submissions to the United Nations, the World Court and have seen legislation in other countries that affect our lives.

Ted Moses, the Cree foreign Ambassador, is a recognized non-voting member of the United Nations. Billy Diamond, when he was Grand Chief, met with the Pope against the wishes of the Canadian government. This visit to the Vatican was important because only heads of sovereign states are called to meet with this religious leader.

The International Year of the Indigenous Peoples in 1993 has passed and gone. Nothing of real importance came out of it. At least nothing we as natives could see.

Now indigenous peoples are about to be given an entire decade starting this December 10, 1994. That's right, 10 years in which something better for indigenous peoples will hopefully happen. But this isn't the only thing planned for Natives this year at the United Nations.

At the United Nations there is a document you should be aware of. It is the *Draft Declaration As Agreed Upon By The Members Of The Working Group At Its Eleventh Session*.

This is a draft declaration of the international rights of indigenous peoples. This is something that will affect you as a Native.

We all know there will be attempts to water the declaration down by non-Native governments. However since they are writing this with Natives in mind, you should be aware of what they presently consider your international rights. At least for now.

It is highly probable that this will be presented in the United Nations General Assembly this year.

BY WILLIAM NICHOLLS

DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

AFFIRMING that indigenous peoples are equal in dignity and rights to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such,

AFFIRMING also that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind,

AFFIRMING further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating the superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust,

REAFFIRMING also that indigenous peoples, in the exercise of their rights, should be free of discrimination of any kind,

CONCERNED that indigenous peoples have been deprived of

their human rights and fundamental freedoms, resulting, *inter alia*, in their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests,

RECOGNIZING the urgent need to respect and promote inherent rights and characteristics of indigenous peoples, especially their right to their lands, territories and resources, which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies,

WELCOMING the fact that indigenous peoples are organizing themselves for political, economic, social and cultural enhancement and in order to bring to an end to all forms of discrimination and oppression wherever they occur,

CONVINCED that control by indigenous peoples over

INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS...

developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs,

RECOGNIZING also that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to a sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment,

EMPHASIZING the need for demilitarization of the lands and territories of indigenous peoples, which will contribute to peace, economic and social progress and development, understanding and friendly relations among nations and peoples of the world,

RECOGNIZING in particular the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children,

RECOGNIZING also that indigenous peoples have the right freely to determine their own relationships with States in a spirit of coexistence, mutual benefit and full respect,

CONSIDERING that treaties, agreements and other arrangements between States and indigenous peoples are properly matters of international concern and responsibility,

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Charter of the United Nations, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights affirm the fundamental importance of the right of self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

BEARING in mind that

nothing in this declaration may be used to deny any peoples their right to self-determination,

ENCOURAGING States to comply with and effectively implement all international instruments, in particular those related to human rights, as they apply to indigenous peoples, in consultation and cooperation with the peoples concerned,

EMPHASIZING that the United Nations has an important and continuing role to play in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples,

BELIEVING that this declaration is a further important step forward for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples and in the development of relevant activities of the United Nations in this field,

SOLEMNLY proclaims the following United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples...

But what does it mean?

THE Declaration continues on and has 45 articles. These articles spell out the specifics and expand on the rights and freedoms outlined above.

But just what do they mean to indigenous peoples?

Does this give indigenous peoples the right to self-determination?

Yes, the draft says it outright, as well as saying that by virtue of the right to self-determination, we have other rights. Indigenous peoples may freely determine their political status. Native peoples may determine their own citizenship within accordance with custom and tradition.

Natives may also freely pursue their education, social, political and economic development. Natives are allowed

to retain their indigenous identities as individuals, communities or nations.

No disadvantage should arise because of the exercise of those rights.

Indigenous peoples have the right to fully participate at all levels of decision-making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through representatives they chose themselves.

Can non-Natives (including the government or corporations) take control of Native lands and resources without indigenous peoples' permission?

No, indigenous peoples cannot be forcibly removed from their lands or territories, according to the Declaration.

In fact, even religious and burial sites are under Native control. This means Natives can say yes or no to archeologists. The draft declaration also deals with ownership, development, control and use of the lands or territories that Native peoples occupy. There is even an article that discusses the return of lands that have been used, damaged, occupied or confiscated.

Native peoples have the right to conservation, restoration and protection of the environment and productive capacity of the lands, territories and resources they occupy.

What about compensation?

Indigenous peoples who have been deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair compensation.

Indigenous peoples have the right to restitution (return) of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their free and informed consent.

Compensation can be in the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status. This, unless otherwise agreed upon by all peoples concerned.

What about protection of indigenous methods of education, languages and other traditional practices?

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to the future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literature, among other things.

As well, no Native child can be forced into a residential school system. Natives have the right to privacy in ceremonies as well as the use and control of ceremonial objects. Native peoples have the right to determine their own judicial systems in accordance with internationally recognized human-rights standards.

Who determines our membership?

Indigenous peoples have the collective right to determine their own citizenship in accordance with their customs and traditions. These rights are granted to both male and female indigenous members.

What about Treaties and Agreements?

Yes, they are protected and will be submitted to an international body if conflicts between the parties cannot be resolved.

Who would make sure this Declaration is carried out?

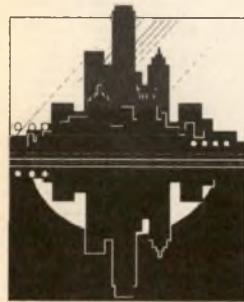
A new body will be created at the United Nations to monitor indigenous rights. This body will be created with the participation of indigenous peoples.

KARAOKE FEVER

Ka-ra-o-ke (kar'e o'ke), n.
the act of singing along to a
music video, esp. one from
which the original vocals have
been eliminated. [*< Japn.*, =
kara empty + oke orchestra]
—Webster's dictionary

THE faltering voices of young men blowing a popular song from the Sixties to smithereens assailed our ears as we walked up the dark stairway leading to Beepers. One of Montreal's many karaoke bars. "Great," I could almost hear Richard thinking. "Now I'll have to suffer through a couple of hours of having to listen to lousy intoxicated singers singing equally bad songs." He couldn't have been more mistaken.

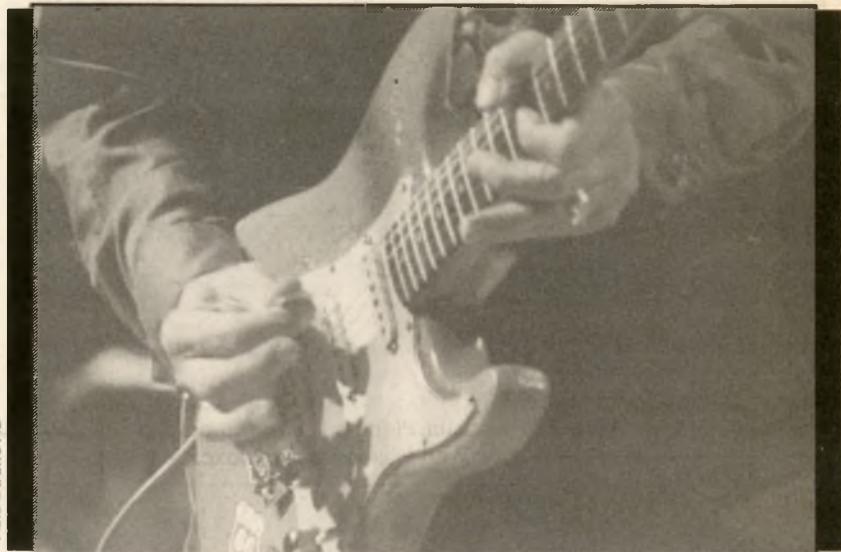
The happy trio was just bringing the song to its agonizing conclusion as we were led



to our seats at the bar by our hostess. Once we were settled in our places a long-haired man who looked like he had kept the same haircut he had in the Seventies walked to the front of the room, picked up the mike and stood facing the audience at the dance floor, which doubled as a stage. Leaning over, I whispered in Josh's ear, "This guy looks like a singer." He certainly sounded like it once he started. He sang Englebert Humperdinck's "Release Me" and did so professionally. He would be a hard act to follow for anybody. Or so I thought.

The next person to go up was a tall and bald (follicly challenged) man who appeared to be in his late forties. The intro to Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman" blasted out of the speakers. The man opened his mouth and the voice that came out sounded like Elvis Presley's after a hard night and a depressed Roy Orbison. I thought I felt a shiver go down my spine but I turned

NEIL DIAMOND



around and saw it was only a woman bumping softly into me as she swayed to the music and beamed at the singer. I think it was her husband the way she was looking at him. Her reaction was just priceless when he got to the part where he had to growl. Grrrrrh. He was an even harder act to follow.

A young man who had been sitting in the corner with his date perusing the song list wanted to impress her so he did the dumbest thing he could think of. He went up to sing. What song he did slips my mind, but his girlfriend's expression begged him to sit back down and shut up. Of course he didn't pay attention and kept on screeching. Give the man points for effort and bravery. Next up was a blond spectacled girl who did a stirring rendition of Juice Newton's "Angel of the Morning." If only she had worn an evening gown, long gloves and contact lenses she would have passed for Barbra Streisand easily.

After "BABS'" sizzling performance, two girls and this chubby guy went up and attempted Soft Cell's "Tainted Love." They were more than pathetic and quit before they finished the song. They still received a polite smattering of applause for their effort. After this more than pathetic threesome's "performance," two very enthusiastic older ladies braved the crowd and did "I'm So Excited" by the Pointer Sisters. It was painfully obvious from the opening bars that they hadn't rehearsed their moves before coming out and failed to excite anybody

but themselves. They did, however, give the audience some helpful pointers on how not to perform. Our agony was prolonged even more an older gentleman had the bright idea of doing a very lame version of Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire." Everybody was in agreement that he should have stayed home and sung lullabies to his grandchildren instead. But even that would have been construed as cruelty to children.

The three of us couldn't summon up the courage to sing that night but I'm sure we all had entertained fantasies of being rock stars. This is probably what compelled me, Josh and Mike to get up in front of a packed house and sing Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Midnight Special" about a year ago. Mike, our self-proclaimed lead singer, felt it necessary to start the show with some pre-performance stage patter and ruined the intro for us. Fortunately we managed to get our rhythm back and finish the song. Mike pulled a star trip and exited as soon as we finished. I'm sure he did this just so they could say, "MIKE HAS LEFT THE BUILDING." We didn't do too bad and received a resounding sitting ovation. A standing ovation would have inflated our egos even more but, hey, in this thing they call "show bidness" you take what you can get.

As we were walking out the door, at the ungodly hour of 11:30 p.m., some guy was crooning Frank Sinatra's "Witchcraft" in the very unusual key of W. Thank Elvis up in Rock 'n' Roll heaven (may he rest in peace) we didn't stay or I would have gone up and sung a duet with him in the key of X sharp.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

In loving memory of a dear and beloved Father, Sam Pashagumiskum, passed away May 7, 1993. Sister, Sarah Fireman, passed away Sept. 7, 1993. Remembered with love forever, daughter and sister, Nellie

201-WANTED

Business opportunity. Distributor needed Cdn. company part/full time, stay home & earn every month in pet nutrition. \$30 billion market, (514) 692-7621.

500-MISCELLANEOUS

A special thank you extended to Connie Pepabano for eight years of service to Adult Education, Chisasibi. Connie, help! We're out of coffee! Missing you... Pam, Jean, Lorna

Jean Rattelle, felicitations! On your new position as ped. counsellor for Sabtuan, Cree Adult Education, Chisasibi. Bear with us!! Laura Secord buddies

HONOURS

Recognizing leaders

The following individuals were honoured for their contributions to the Cree Nation at the 20th Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees in Eastmain.

The honours went to individuals who were founders, executive members or on the board of directors of the Grand Council of the Crees at the time of its formation in 1974.

Founders

Chief Robert Kanatewat, Fort George
 Chief Fred Blackned, Paint Hills
 Chief Matthew Shanoush, Eastmain (1915-1985)
 Chief Billy Diamond, Rupert House
 Chief Smally Petawabano, Mistassini
 Chief Peter Gull, Waswanipi
 Chief Bertie Wapachee, Nemaska (passed away 1993)

Executive

Grand Chief Billy Diamond
 Grand Chief Ted Moses
 Executive Chief Philip Awashish
 Adm. Chief-Treasurer Steven Bearskin

Board of Directors

Chief Robbie Dick, Great Whale River
 Noah Sheshamoush, Great Whale River
 Chief Josie Sam Atkinson, Fort George
 Roderick Pachano, Fort George
 Chief Walter Hughboy, Paint Hills (Old Factory Band)
 John Matches, Paint Hills (Old Factory Band)
 Chief Rusty Cheezo, Eastmain
 Willie Moses, Eastmain
 Chief James Blackned, Rupert House
 Hugo Hester, Rupert House
 Chief Harry Jolly, Nemaska
 Lawrence Jimiken, Nemaska
 Chief Simon Ottereyes, Waswanipi (passed away 1989)
 Abel S. Kitchen, Waswanipi
 Chief Henry Mianscum, Mistassini
 Thomas Coon, Mistassini

COVER

LET'S WALK TOGETHER...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

being abused. Their innocence is being taken away from them.

This generation I would say is starting to rise and say, Ok, that's got to stop. We do know that a lot of things need to stop.

In the Cree Territory right now, it's going to be the sovereignty issue now. But it's not really the problem here. If I had a choice and I was the Grand Chief deciding how to deal with sovereignty, I would first deal with social issues. To hell with the government B.S. They've got thier problems. We've got ours.

Too many things are happening today. Who knows? Something might happen tonight to a young girl or a young man. People really need to wake up and stop saying these things aren't happening. These things happen in every community. Who knows? It might even happen in your own home. We need to start somewhere.

I guess I don't have any more questions. Is there something else you wanted to add?

I guess the last thing I could say is it's a dirty world out there. And us people need to wake up, open our eyes, get up, start walking together. What happened in the past, happened. Whatever I'm saying now, these things need to be done—something needs to be done. All forms of abuse, something needs to be done.

It's time that our leaders come back to their people—come home. Walk with us. Don't go ahead. Come back to the people and walk with the people. "People" means a young baby that's been born. "People" means young men or young women. "People" means parents. "People" means middle-aged. "People" means Elders or old men, old women. "People" means the leaders themselves. They're all one. We're all one.

There needs to be change. We all have to wake up together, open our eyes together, stand up together, walk together, walk side by side. Nothing could bring us down if that happens.

Many things are coming our way. That's why I feel there needs to be a change. Those things are coming. We need to prepare ourselves for it. If you don't want to prepare yourself and if you are a leader, step down. Let somebody else take over. Somebody else who can help your people to stand up for what they believe in, for what they know is right.

If you're not a leader, think about it. This is the world today.

If we choose to keep the land, it has to start today. If we choose not to keep the land, we still have to prepare ourselves for some day when we don't have a land.

Think of our children. Think of their children. There's more to come.

We may live in a dirty world right now, but the land is still there. And the land is part of us. We don't own it. It's part of who we are. It's there for us. It's there for our children—and their children. That is the way it has to be looked at.

Whatever happens tomorrow will happen. Whatever happened yesterday, happened. Whatever is going to happen today is still going to happen, or hasn't happened yet.

There needs to be a change, my people. I'm not ahead of you. I'm not behind you. I'm walking with you.

All of us can walk together. Akuuda...

Remember, I'm still young, I still have a lot to learn and I don't know anything. Wachiya. All my relations.



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